

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer implemented method of responding to a request for a supplier quotation (RFQ) indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services by the supplier, the method comprising:

accessing an index of RFQs, the RFQs being  
generated by at least one requester;  
identifying an RFQ for reply;  
retrieving the identified RFQ from a data store  
at the requester; and  
generating a reply to the retrieved RFQ.

2. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein identifying an RFQ comprises:

filtering entries in the index of RFQs based on  
supplier filter criteria; and  
identifying the identified RFQ as an RFQ that  
meets the supplier filter criteria.

3. The computer implemented method of claim 1 and further comprising:

after retrieving the identified RFQ, applying  
detailed supplier filter criteria to the  
retrieved RFQ based on a content of the  
retrieved RFQ.

4. The computer implemented method of claim 3 wherein generating a reply, comprises:

generating a reply to the retrieved RFQ only if it meets the detailed supplier filter criteria.

5. The computer implemented method of claim 1 and further comprising:

transmitting the reply to the requester that generated the retrieved RFQ.

6. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein generating the reply comprises:

accessing content of the retrieved RFQ; and  
generating the reply based on the content of the RFQ.

7. The computer implemented method of claim 6 wherein generating the reply comprises:

automatically generating the reply based on the content of the RFQ.

8. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein accessing the index, comprises:

accessing the index over a global computer network.

9. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein retrieving the identified RFQ, comprises:

retrieving the identified RFQ from the data store at the requester over a global computer network.

10. The computer implemented method of claim 1 and further comprising:

prior to accessing the index, providing supplier registration information to a registration component; and  
downloading a reply engine, the reply engine accessing the index.

11. A computer implemented method of soliciting a response to a request for supplier quotation (RFQ), the RFQ being generated by a requester and including job information indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services from a supplier to the requester, the method comprising:

entering the job information into a  
predetermined RFQ template;  
saving the RFQ template at a predetermined location in a data store local to the requester, such that the RFQ template is exposed for downloading to a supplier for generation of a reply; and  
sending indexing information for computer implemented indexing of the RFQ template at a remote index.

12. The computer implemented method of claim 11 and further comprising:

prior to entering the job information, providing  
supplier registration information to a  
registration component; and  
downloading an RFQ generation engine, the RFQ  
generation engine sending the indexing  
information.

13. The computer implemented method of claim 11  
wherein entering the job information comprises:  
entering requester filter criteria indicative of  
suppliers authorized to reply to the RFQ  
template.

14. The computer implemented method of claim 11  
wherein sending indexing information comprises:  
sending requester filter criteria indicative of  
suppliers authorized to reply to the RFQ  
template.

15. The computer implemented method of claim 11 and  
further comprising:  
receiving a reply to the RFQ template from a  
supplier.

16. The computer implemented method of claim 15  
wherein entering the job information comprises:  
entering award criteria indicative of criteria  
considered in awarding a job corresponding  
to the RFQ to a supplier.

17. The computer implemented method of claim 16 and further comprising:

evaluating the received reply based on the award criteria; and  
suggesting a winning supplier based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

18. The computer implemented method of claim 17 wherein evaluating comprises:

weighting the award criteria according to a predetermined weight.

19. A computer implemented method of indexing requests for supplier quotations (RFQs), each of the RFQs being generated by a requester and including job information indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services from a supplier to the requester, the method comprising:

receiving indexing information from the requesters, the indexing information being indicative of the RFQs; and  
entering an entry for each RFQ in an index based on the index information, the entry being indicative of a category of a corresponding RFQ and a location of the corresponding RFQ on a data store at the requester, the index being exposed to access by suppliers.

20. The computer implemented method of claim 19 wherein entering an entry comprises, for each entry

in the index, including filter criteria accessible by the suppliers to identify RFQs for reply.

21. The computer implemented method of claim 19 wherein receiving the indexing information includes receiving an identifier of a specific supplier.

22. The computer implemented method of claim 21 and further comprising:

notifying the specific supplier that an RFQ is indexed that identifies the specific supplier.

23. The computer implemented method of claim 19 wherein receiving indexing information comprises:

receiving the indexing information from a remote requester over a network.

24. A system for responding to a request for a supplier quotation (RFQ) generated by at least one requester and indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services by the supplier, the system comprising:

an RFQ reply engine configured to access an index of RFQs, identify an RFQ for reply, retrieve the identified RFQ from a data store at a requester, and generate a reply to the retrieved RFQ.

25. The system of claim 24 wherein the RFQ reply engine is configured to identify an RFQ by filtering entries in the index of RFQs based on supplier filter criteria, and identifying the identified RFQ as an RFQ that meets the supplier filter criteria.

26. The system of claim 24 wherein the RFQ reply engine is further configured to, after retrieving the identified RFQ, apply detailed supplier filter criteria to the retrieved RFQ based on a content of the retrieved RFQ.

27. The system claim 26 wherein the RFQ reply engine is configured to generate a reply by generating a reply to the retrieved RFQ only if it meets the detailed supplier filter criteria.

28. The system of claim 24 wherein the RFQ reply engine is configured to generate the reply by accessing content of the retrieved RFQ and generate the reply based on the content of the RFQ.

29. A system for soliciting a response to a request for supplier quotation (RFQ), the RFQ being generated by a requester and including job information indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services from a supplier to the requester, the system comprising:

an RFQ generation engine configured to receive  
the job information into a predetermined

RFQ template, save the RFQ template at a predetermined location in a data store local to the requester, such that the RFQ template is exposed for downloading to a supplier for generation of a reply, and send indexing information for computer implemented indexing of the RFQ template at a remote index.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein the RFQ generation engine is configured to receive the job information by receiving requester filter criteria indicative of suppliers authorized to reply to the RFQ template.

31. The system of claim 29 wherein the RFQ generation engine is configured to send indexing information by sending requester filter criteria indicative of suppliers authorized to reply to the RFQ template.

32. The system of claim 29 wherein the RFQ generation engine is further configured to receiving a reply to the RFQ template from a supplier.

33. The system of claim 32 wherein the RFQ generation engine is configured to receive the job information by receiving award criteria indicative of criteria considered in awarding a job corresponding to the RFQ to a supplier.



34. The system of claim 33 wherein the RFQ generation engine is further configured to evaluate the received reply based on the award criteria, and suggest a winning supplier based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

35. The system claim 34 wherein the RFQ generation engine is configured to evaluate the received reply by weighting the award criteria according to a predetermined weight.